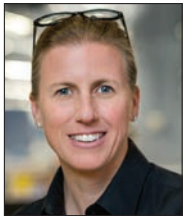


Two Downtown Towers to Add to City's Skyline

DEVELOPMENT: 40-Story Project Likely to Be New Gateway to Downtown

■ By RAY HUARD

Two East Village apartment towers likely to become San Diego landmarks required special care from the Baltimore-based architectural firm that designed them.



Kelly Farrell

The 40-story project at 11th Avenue and B Street is special because it will be a gateway to downtown, said Kelly Farrell, president and CEO of CallisonRTKL.

Farrell said the building “will present a great visual identity.”

Because it is at a gateway to the city, the design of the building “requires a lot of restraint.”

“It requires a thoughtful pause,” Farrell said.

Presenting an unusual challenge because of an earthquake fault that runs through the middle of the site was a project at Park Boulevard and Broadway that includes a 40-story apartment tower with two smaller structures – a six-story and a seven-story building – that share the site.

“We have yet to find a project that we would say is run-of-the mill,” Farrell said.

In this case, not only did Callison-RTKL have to deal with the fault line running through the site, but there was a no-build zone around the site adjacent to the fault itself.

Liberty National Corp. is the developer of both projects.

11th and B

Reaching a height of 414 feet tall on a 30,000 square-foot site, the project at 11th and B would have 471 apartments comprised of 248 studio apartments, 141 one-bedroom apartments, 30 two-bedroom apartments, 48 three-bedroom apartments and four penthouse suites. The project was approved by the city in 2019.

It also includes 7,800 square feet of ground floor retail space and three levels of below ground parking and six levels of above grade parking.

Amenities include a pool deck and sky decks totaling 26,092 square feet.

Located at the south side of B Street between 10th and 11th avenues, Farrell said the building is meant to look as an art piece in its own right.

Visually striking with a layered look to its façade created partly with apartment balconies, Farrell said one goal of the design was to make a structure that stands out among contemporary buildings but also “stands the sense of time.”



The main tower in the CallisonRTKL project will soar to 414 feet.

Rendering courtesy of CallisonRTKL

Keeping it Simple

“There’s a lot of restraint involved in peeling back and letting simplicity do its work,” Farrell said. “There’s an adage that you know you’ve got it right when you can’t take anything away. You want the let the building speak for itself and the form to have an identity.”

In this case, Farrell said the design is very conscious of the building’s height, so care was taken to give it a scaled back feeling as it reaches the ground.

“It’s not a tower that’s trying to escape, a tower trying to reach out to the horizon,” Farrell said. “The tower is felt in layers.”

With operable windows, Farrell said the

tower is meant to feel alive with residents moving in and out of their balconies and opening and closing windows.

CallisonRTKL also stayed away from the dark reflective glass that’s used in some other buildings.

“We don’t want the building to be dark and brooding. We want it to be light and airy,” Farrell said.

“It’s an easy thing to put dark glass on a building. It’s a terrible idea,” Farrell said.

Not only does the dark glass reflect sunlight during the daytime, but it becomes transparent at night when lights are turned on inside, she said.

In this case, “During the day you can

experience the vitality of the building and at night, it’s quite private.

Park and Broadway

The project at Park and Broadway owes much of its design to the earthquake fault running through the site.

The tower and two smaller buildings had to go to the side of the fault.

The project has a total of 640 apartments comprised of 551 one-bedroom apartments, 88 two-bedroom apartments and one three-bedroom apartment, according to CallisonRTKL.

There’s also 16,848 square feet of ground-floor retail space and 12,900 square feet of central open green area.

The site is bounded by Park Boulevard, 13th Street, Broadway and C Street.

Amenities include a pool deck and 8,003 square feet of sky decks in the tower and two roof decks totaling 11,457 square feet in the smaller buildings.

“I give our client a lot of credit because most people would have looked at that site and said, ‘nah, it’s messy and complicated,’” Farrell said.

Instead, Farrell said the alignment of the project with the tower on Park Boulevard and Broadway opened the site up for the large open green garden area.

“A fault line can be a big challenge but it turned out to be such an opportunity for the garden,” Farrell said. “What we were able to deliver was a much better pedestrian experience because that fault line carved a garden through the site.”

The façade of the building is broken up visually by an almost hour-glass shaped middle section that runs vertically up the building with two sides almost folding into it.

The tower was oriented in the north-south direction partly because of the fault line but also to create better view corridors with a bay window or balcony angled toward a view.

“We wanted to make sure that when you walk out onto your balcony, you weren’t looking at someone else,” Farrell said. ■

CallisonRTKL

CALLISONRTKL

PRESIDENT AND CEO: Kelly Farrell

FOUNDED: 1946

HEADQUARTERS: Baltimore, MD

BUSINESS: Global architecture, planning and design firm

REVENUE: \$357 million 2019.

WEBSITE: www.callisonrtkl.com

NOTABLE: Collaborated with PODS, which has partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to develop containers that can be converted to isolation units for treating COVID-19 patients